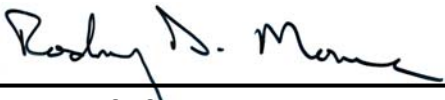


**RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

NOTE: This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Chapter 7	Number 3	Effective Date 04/29/08	Review Date 2011
Subject CRIME SCENE PROTECTION			☐ New Order ☒ Replaces O.O. 201-1, (01/07/05)
References VLEPSC OPR.01.08a, OPR.02.01a, OPR.02.01b, OPR.02.01c, OPR.02.01d, OPR.02.03d, OPR.02.05, ADM.07.02c, ADM.25.12 CALEA 42.2.1a, 42.2.1b, 42.2.1c, 42.2.1d General Order 7-24, 7-9			
 _____ Chief of Police or Designee		04/29/08 _____ Date	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish guidelines for the protection of crime scenes.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Richmond Police Department to establish proper procedures for crime scene protection to ensure efficient and effective criminal investigations. This directive does not list the Department's direct investigative functions in each specific category, such as homicide, rape, robbery, etc., but identifies those elements common to **most** investigations.

The success or failure of a criminal investigation depends **a great deal** upon the thoroughness and the immediacy of the preliminary investigation. What the officer does or fails to do in the earliest phase of the investigation **may** determine whether the perpetrator is identified and apprehended or goes undetected. Positive and effective police action in this vital stage is also an important factor in determining the outcome of the case in court.

Personnel shall refer to General Order 7-24, Public Information Requests, regarding the guidelines, procedures and responsibilities for the release of public information.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this general order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

IV. PROCEDURE, ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. First Officer on the Scene **shall**:

1. Arrive at the scene of a crime as soon as possible **and observe, record and/or document all pertinent conditions, events and remarks**;
2. Locate and assist **victim(s)**:
 - a) Determine the condition of **any** victim(s) and summon medical personnel if necessary. **When applicable**, give first aid until assistance arrives; **and**,
 - b) Obtain Dying Declarations, if appropriate - (Dying Declarations **may be used as** evidence if properly obtained from the victim. **NOTE: For Dying Declarations to be admissible, the victim must be cognizant of the fact that he/she is dying and has no hope of recovery at the time of his/her statement**). Ask the following questions:
 - (1) "What is the name of the person who did this to you?"
 - (2) "How did you get your injuries?"
 - (3) "Describe the person who did this to you."
 - (4) "Do you **believe** that you are dying?"
3. Determine the nature of the offense and notify **an immediate** Supervisor **or have DEC notify them**, as appropriate;
4. **Furnish DEC with descriptions, direction of flight and other relevant information concerning wanted person(s) or vehicles**;
5. Avoid touching, handling or stepping on evidence left by the **perpetrator**. Remember that nothing is too small or insignificant to have value. Any officer who enters the crime scene may be required to release any personal property that may be of value to the investigation (i.e. shoes for shoe print comparison);
6. Prepare the Crime Scene Integrity Roster (PD-94), and turn same over to **the** assigned Detective before leaving **the** scene;
7. Prevent the obliteration or deterioration of tangible clues. Preserve the area to permit the investigative team freedom of movement **and** afford protection against the destruction or contamination of evidence by both authorized and unauthorized personnel;
8. **In extreme cases, after the scene has been stabilized, the ranking supervisor shall determine whether it is appropriate to utilize a sheet to cover the deceased victim's body.**
9. Protect the crime scene:
 - a) First, determine the exact focal point or area of the crime scene;

- b) Secure the **primary** focal point of the incident and extend the area of protection to include **any and all evidentiary areas**. **When the crime scene is located outdoors, use** crime scene tape to secure the area to include barricading the street if necessary;
- c) Maintain the crime scene in the same physical condition as the perpetrator left it;
- d) Keep unauthorized persons out of the crime scene area. (This will include all other police officers); and,
- e) Require all authorized persons entering the crime scene to do so in the same direction and manner.

10. Secure each witness:

- a) **Obtain complete identification of all witnesses;**
- b) **Obtain written statements from witnesses;**
- c) Do not permit witnesses or other bystanders to wander about inside the protected area;
- d) If possible, keep witnesses at the scene separate from each other, and detain them until an investigator(s) arrives at the scene; and,
- e) Maintain a positive interaction with witnesses and solicit their support in determining the facts of the case.

11. Take immediate action to effect a lawful arrest, or detain the individual as appropriate, if the perpetrator is still at the scene; **and,**

12. **Prepare Incident Based Report.**

B. First Supervisor on Scene **shall:**

- 1. Contact **a DEC supervisor at 646-5110** and provide a brief synopsis and available phone number;
- 2. Advise the **appropriate** Detective Sergeant of the situation at the scene; and,
- 3. Maintain command of the scene until the investigating detective responds and makes arrangements for continued scene protection.

C. Detective Sergeant shall:

- 1. Authorize the call out of the detective and the notification of the Forensic Sergeant by **a DEC supervisor;**
- 2. Contact the investigating detective and advise him/her of the situation at the scene; and,

3. Call **a DEC supervisor** and advise **as to the** name(s) of the responding detective(s) and an estimated time of arrival (ETA).
- D. Forensic Sergeant shall:
- Contact the on-call forensic detective and advise him/her of the situation at the scene.
- E. **Unit 9 or Ranking Supervisor shall:**
- Determine whether it is appropriate to utilize a sheet to cover the deceased victim's body, in extreme cases, after the scene has been stabilized.***
- F. **Assigned Major Crimes Division Sergeant or Assigned Detective shall:**
1. Arrive at the scene as soon as possible;
 2. Upon arrival, interview the first officer on the scene **and** the supervisor **on the scene** to establish the facts of the case. Record your time of arrival, the time of the original call and the names of all persons present at the crime scene;
 3. Take complete charge of the investigation **and make** arrangements with the patrol supervisor on the scene to continue the protection of the scene until the investigation is complete;
 4. View the immediate scene to determine the resources that are needed to conduct a thorough investigation;
 5. In cases where immediate forensic assistance is required, notify forensic personnel within one hour of the Detective's arrival on the scene;
 6. Notify the Medical Examiner in all death cases;
 7. Notify the Commonwealth's Attorney's office;
 8. Interview all witnesses (and victims, if possible) as soon as possible. A recording **device** should be used at the scene to record any statements, **if applicable**. Witnesses and/or victims may be brought to the **Major Crimes Division** for more formal interviews;
 9. Relay **any additional** information for the ALL UNIT BROADCAST on suspect(s) to the Division of Emergency Communications (DEC) as soon as possible;
 10. **Where required by law**, obtain a search warrant or consent **to search** before searching for or collecting evidence;
 11. Direct and assist the forensic investigator(s) with the crime scene work. The investigating detective should view the crime scene completely **after the forensic detective has established a safe route and** make notes of and observe the evidence collected;
 12. In death cases, notify the next of kin. **Refer to General Order 7-9, Death Investigation Reporting, Notification Of Death And Emergency Messages;**

13. After leaving the scene, prepare an Incident ***Based*** Report ***and Victimization form, when appropriate;***
14. Complete a follow-up investigation; and,
15. Prepare a case ***file.***

G. ***DEC Supervisor shall:***

1. ***Page the on-call Detective Sergeant and provide him/her with the on-scene supervisor's available phone number and the brief scene synopsis;***
2. ***Broadcast direction of flight and other relevant information concerning wanted person(s) or vehicles via ALL UNIT BROADCAST; and,***
3. ***Act as a liaison between on-scene officers and supervisors to relay pertinent information.***

H. Forensic ***Unit Members shall:***

1. Proceed to the scene ***as applicable;***
2. Upon arrival, members of the Forensic Unit shall take complete charge of the crime scene. They shall make arrangements with the Patrol Supervisor on the scene to continue the protection of the scene, until the scene is processed;
3. Conduct preliminary survey by obtaining known facts and observe complete scene;
4. Make narrative description;
5. Photograph complete scene. (Still photography and video);
6. Measure and sketch the crime scene and all evidence;
7. Evaluate and recover all physical evidence;
8. Evaluate and recover fingerprint evidence;
9. Conduct a detailed search;
10. Collect, record, mark, and preserve all evidence; and,
11. Conduct a final survey to ensure conditions of the crime scene are thoroughly documented.

V. **FORMS**

A. ***PD-94, Crime Scene Integrity Roster***

B. ***Incident Based Report (IBR)***

C. ***Victimization Form (Use only for Violent Crimes)***